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An English Gentleman's Encounter with
Islamic Architecture: Henry Swinburne's
Travels through Spain (1779)

KATHRYN MOORE HELENIAC

I have been more minute and inquisitive about every particular on the route, than a Fellow of the Antiquarian Society in a heap of rubbish, and intend most bravely to go into print hereafter.¹

The British 'discovery' of exotic Moorish architecture in Spain (though never actually forgotten) is generally associated with the Romantic generation of the early nineteenth century.² But an enthusiastic appreciation of Moorish monuments, particularly of the fourteenth-century Alhambra in Granada, appeared earlier in a publication by Henry Swinburne (1743-1803), entitled *Travels through Spain in the Years 1775-1776* (London 1779). In contrast to the more common and well documented excursions of English gentlemen to Italy on the 'Grand Tour',³ Swinburne's very extensive and engagingly described travels in Spain, then relatively unknown territory to Northern Europeans, and most importantly, his careful examination and early praise of Spain's Moorish architecture were unusual.⁴ Today the Swinburne name is principally renowned because of its association with the nineteenth-century poet Algernon Swinburne (1837-1909),⁵ but it was Algernon's great-great uncle, Henry Swinburne (1743-1803) who initially brought fame to the Swinburne name in the eighteenth century with his popular travel writings, not only *Travels through Spain*, but also *Travels in the Two Sicilies in the Years 1777, 1778, 1779, and 1780* (London 1783-1785), both of which contained engraved illustrations based upon his drawings, followed by two volumes of letters published posthumously under the title *The Courts of Europe at the Close of the Last Century* (London 1841).

Henry Swinburne was the fourth son of Sir John Swinburne (1698-1745), third baronet of Capheaton, Northumberland. He was educated at Scorton Hall, Yorkshire, and later, as the son of an old Roman Catholic family, in a monastic seminary in Lacelle, France. He continued his studies in Paris, Bordeaux and at the Royal Academy in Turin, devoting his attention to literature and art.⁶ That he was an exceptionally well read and well educated man is evident by examining the contents of his library, sold over the course of seven days following his death in 1803.⁷ It featured volumes in Latin, Greek, Arabic, French, German, Italian and Spanish, in addition

to his native English. These texts ranged from ancient (Homer, Horace, Juvenal, Cicero, Ovid) to modern authors (Cervantes, Shakespeare, Fielding, Goldsmith, Smollett, Sterne, Swift); from philosophy (Locke, Montesquieu, Shaftesbury, Rousseau, Voltaire) to economics (Adam Smith); from art and architecture (Vasari, Palladio, De Piles, Hogarth, Winckelmann) to natural history and mathematics (Franklin, Linnaeus, Le Clerc); from various historical studies (on Spain, China, ancient Rome and others) to religious tracts (on English Catholics, on Dissenters, on Muslim beliefs, including a copy of the Koran) – to cite just a few. Though Henry was well educated, as the youngest son in the family he was not wealthy. Fortunately, Henry's eldest brother provided him with a small estate at Hamsterley in Durham along with an annuity, which gave him a comfortable income. His financial condition improved considerably with his marriage in 1767 to Martha Baker, a woman of substantial fortune who owned property in the West Indies. She was the daughter of John Baker of Chichester, solicitor to the Leeward Islands.⁸

In the 1770s and 1780s Henry travelled extensively in Europe. He created a charming caricature of himself in 1775 (Fig. 1) as a solitary, monk-like figure wandering on the outskirts of Montpellier, walking-stick in hand, gazing heavenwards for inspiration and solace. If this was meant to suggest the nature of his European travels, it was for the most part fanciful (or wishful), since he generally travelled with this wife and children, and sometimes in the company of his friend Sir Thomas Gascoigne (1745–1810), eighth baronet of Parlington, Yorkshire, described by Philip Thicknesse, a contemporary, as 'a sensible, genteel, well-bred man',⁹ who provided the necessary financial support for their travels while Henry provided the art expertise.¹⁰ While in Rome in 1779 Sir Thomas and Henry Swinburne were the subject of portraits by Pompeo Batoni (Fig. 2).¹¹ Henry was Sir Thomas Gascoigne's companion on his travels through Spain in 1775–1776;¹² Sir Thomas's wealth enabled the duo to tour 'with two coaches, two sets of horses, two saddle mules and [...] protected by a train of servants', according to Thicknesse, who felt considerable envy when he encountered this elaborate entourage when he himself made a short excursion into northeastern Spain in the same period.¹³ Sir Thomas's and Henry's travels through Spain resulted in Henry's most popular publication of the same name (a work that was reissued several times in English and also in French and German translation),¹⁴ one that introduced the English reading and viewing public to a serious appreciation of the Moorish architecture in Spain.

In his *Travels through Spain* Henry described the appearance of the Spanish inhabitants, their customs and dress, the land, the agricultural production, the cities, the villages he passed through, along with the inevitable trials and tribulations of an intrepid traveller. He also succinctly summarised the history of the country.¹⁵ An occasional reference to Cervantes's *Don Quixote* added piquant validity to his experiences.¹⁶ His descriptions were conveyed in

1. Henry Swinburne, *Montpellier from the Road to Toulouse*, signed and dated 1775.
Pen and ink, pencil, 15.5 × 35 cm. New Haven, Ct, Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection

2. Pompeo Batoni, *Henry Swinburne*, signed and dated 1779.
Oil on canvas, 70.8 × 57.5 cm. Newcastle upon Tyne, Laing Art Gallery

near pictorial fashion with sharp visual detail. A typical example was his very precise, lengthy characterisation of the dress of Catalonian men who:

wear their hair in a net; a broad silver-laced hat, squeezed flat like those of the English sailors, hung on one side of their head, an handkerchief loosely tied round the neck; a short striped waistcoat, and over it a red jacket, with large silver buttons like bells dangling from it; a blue skirt, bound with yellow tape, rolled several times around their waist [...] on the left shoulder hangs a blue great coat embroidered with white thread; their breeches are blue and white striped; their stockings, rolled below their knees, and gartered with an enormous buckle, and a bunch of black ribbons reach only down to the ankle, where they tied several rounds of blue fillet very tight, to keep on their packthread sandals.¹⁷

Most importantly, he described and depicted with great care examples of Moorish architecture in Spain, then an exciting new subject that he himself explained was 'not yet worn threadbare'.¹⁸ For while fanciful 'Moorish' architecture had been the inspiration for whimsical buildings in Kew Gardens earlier in the eighteenth century – Sir William Chambers' so-called 'Alhambra' of 1758 and 'The Mosque' of 1761 (both no longer extant) – these designs were not dependent upon an examination of actual Islamic architecture, and as a result bore little relation to Islamic forms.¹⁹ In contrast, Henry Swinburne's publication provided an enthusiastic eye-witness account of the exotic Moorish architecture of Spain accompanied by his precise, informative illustrations. As he wrote to his brother, 'I have been more minute and inquisitive about every particular on the route, than a Fellow of the Antiquarian Society in a heap of rubbish'.²⁰ We also have the word of a near contemporary, John Nichols, in *Literary Anecdotes of the Eighteenth Century* (London 1815), that Henry Swinburne whose 'ingenuity and learning [...] [were] well known [...] was the first who brought us intimately acquainted with Spain, and the Arts and Monuments of its ancient inhabitants'.²¹

In fact, Richard Twiss slightly pre-empted Henry Swinburne with his publication, *Travels through Portugal and Spain in 1772 and 1773* (London 1775),²² a development that initially worried Henry. As he explained to his brother: 'The publication of a pompous book on Spain, by Mr. Twiss, damped my ardour when I heard of it.' But after Henry examined it, he declared it a 'shallow, pedantic, catch-penny book' and proceeded with his own plans.²³ Twiss's book contained only one plate of the Alhambra, although he had attempted to purchase additional drawings from a survey of the Alhambra then being undertaken by Madrid's Academia de San Fernando in the mid-1770s (exact plans, elevations, views, etc.).²⁴ But Twiss reported that it was only with some difficulty that he even received their 'consent to my copying the general view of the Alhambra',²⁵ an illustration that accompanied his text.

Henry Swinburne was allowed a much freer hand. He spent a week sketching the Alhambra,²⁶ was later given access by the court librarian, Miguel Casiri, to translations of the Arabic manuscripts in El Escorial and to all the plans that the Spanish Academy had made of the site, and hence could write with conviction, 'I am sure nobody ever had the same opportunities'.²⁷

He boasted in a letter to his brother that he had 'employed several days in taking the views inside and outside of the Moorish palace at Grenada [*sic*] – the ornaments, capitals, dimensions, mosaics, etc. of its apartments, – by which means I have formed a collection that will give you a just idea of their architecture'. His enthusiasm for what was to him novel architecture comes through in his descriptions to his brother: 'the richness of the stucco work, the profusion of water, marbles, paintings and gildings, are truly wonderful, and utterly unlike anything I ever met before. There is a light fairy kind of appearance in the pillars and ornaments...' ²⁸ Unfortunately, in the tradition of English gentlemen travellers with antiquarian interests who often removed or defaced the monuments they admired, Henry confessed to leaving behind some graffiti: 'I wrote my adieus on the wall behind the door in one of the subterranean rooms [of the Alhambra], near the Moorish burial place.' ²⁹ This was perhaps a lesser evil than that committed by his competitor Twiss, who admitted to having taken away some palace tiles as souvenirs. ³⁰

Henry produced several sketches of the Alhambra in Granada and the Mosque at Cordova while he was there, giving greater attention to the Alhambra, since the Mosque was considerably altered (or 'much spoilt' to use his own words) from its original condition. ³¹ *Travels through Spain* featured six engravings of the Alhambra and three of the Mosque at Cordova. The architecture was illustrated with special care, as Henry stated in the preface: 'I can answer for the exactness of the drawings: I never took the liberty of adding or retrenching a single object.' ³² While this is an exaggeration (omissions and alterations inevitably made their way into his sketches of such intricate forms), his careful preparatory drawings, now held by the Yale Center for British Art, ³³ and the published illustrations that derived from them (Fig. 3-9) are highly detailed renderings reflecting his desire to be accurate. He depicted *The Court of the Lions* (Fig. 4) with very fine pencil-and-ink markings in an effort to capture the delicate and elaborate ornamentation on the walls and columns. With *The Great Bath* (Fig. 6 and 7) Swinburne drew attention to the exotic light effects created by the various arched openings leading in three directions and by the ceiling cut-outs which cast flickering patterns on the floor, further dramatised by the close viewpoint. The column capitals (Fig. 8) that he so admired are drawn with precision, recording the decorative floral patterns, stylised vines and escutcheons. He even provided a measurement key on some of his illustrations (Fig. 9) to enable his readers to assess the scale of the various architectural forms. As a result, the informative drawings translated into etchings give a generally reliable impression of the overall appearance of the forms, the scale, the complicated motifs and densely decorated surfaces of the Moorish design. Still, despite his best intentions, Swinburne's eye and hand could not capture completely all of the incredibly extensive stucco and tile ornamentation of this Hispano-Muslim palace (a point he conceded in letters to his brother, see below); and the process whereby the drawings were made into etchings by another hand (F. Giomignani) also involved some distortions, alterations or additions. ³⁴ For example, in the *The Court of the Lions*

3. Henry Swinburne, *The Alhambra from the Fort of St. Helena*. Pen and ink with wash, 15.2 x 21.5 cm.
 New Haven, Ct, Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection. Corresponding to an engraving attached
 to the end of some copies of H. Swinburne, *Travels through Spain* (London 1779)

4. Henry Swinburne, *Court of the Lions in the Alhambra of Granada*. Pencil, pen and ink with wash, 16.2 × 19.2 cm.
New Haven, Ct, Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection. Corresponding to the left side of the *Court of the Lions*
etching in H. Swinburne, *Travels through Spain* (London 1779) (see Fig. 5)

COURT of the LIONS in the ALHAMBRA or MOORISH PALACE of GRANADA.

5. Francesco Giomagnani after Henry Swinburne, *The Court of the Lions in the Alhambra or Moorish Palace of Granada*. Etched illustration in H. Swinburne, *Travels through Spain* (London 1779). New Haven, Ct, Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection (for drawing, see Fig.4)

6. Henry Swinburne, *The Great Bath at the Alhambra*. Pencil, pen and ink with wash, 20 × 16 cm. New Haven, Ct, Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection. Corresponding to the etched illustration in H. Swinburne, *Travels through Spain* (London 1779) (see Fig.7)

H.S. del. 1775.

F. Giomignani sc.

GREAT BATH OF THE ALAMBRA.

7. Francesco Giomignani after Henry Swinburne, *The Great Bath of the Alambra* [sic]. Etched illustration in H. Swinburne, *Travels through Spain* (London 1779). New Haven, Ct, Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection (for drawing, see Fig.6)

8. Henry Swinburne, *Collection of Architectural Drawings*. Pen and ink with wash,
 17.6 × 8.7 cm, 19.6 × 5.3 cm, 17.7 × 10.5 cm.
 New Haven, Ct, Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection
 (for etching after these drawings, see Fig. 9)

9. Francesco Giomignani after Henry Swinburne, Cupboard in the Hall of the Ambassadors [sic], Six Capitals of Columns in the Court of the Lions in the Alambra [sic] of Granada, Column of the Court of the Lions. Etched illustration in H. Swinburne, *Travels through Spain* (London 1779), opposite p.179. New Haven, Ct, Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection (for drawings, see Fig.8)

etching (Fig.5), the arched openings in the courtyard feature a more emphatic horseshoe shape than the more accurately rendered arches in the drawing (Fig.4); the geometric design on the back wall is bolder; mere squiggles over the principal door become five-petalled flowers in the etching; the tiled floor displays a dramatic zig-zag pattern (a reflection of the actual floor) where none exists in the drawing; and the mouths of the sculpted lions in the fountain now spout water. The etching of *The Great Bath* (Fig.7) correctly records two additional cut-out openings in the ceiling pattern, and, thanks to the services of the professional printmaker, also exhibits a more competent rendering of the complicated perspective than Swinburne himself managed to produce in his drawing (Fig.6). Presumably Swinburne approved these changes, even requested them, since Giomignani did the etchings under Swinburne's direction and they appeared over Henry's initials in the publication. Lastly, the ornate Arabic script on the walls, though simulated with obvious effort in both drawings and prints, is incomprehensible, evidently copied without any real understanding of the text or even of Arabic characters.³⁵

The illustrations are accompanied by lengthy descriptions praising the architectural design. As he noted, 'The ceilings and walls are incrustrated [*sic*] with fretwork in stucco, so minute and intricate, that the most patient draughtsman would find it difficult to follow³⁶ [...] the inimitable delicacy in the ceiling [...] is so artfully frosted and handled, as to exceed belief'.³⁷ With regard to the Alhambra's Hall of the Abencerrages, he professed, 'the form of the hall, the elegance of its cupola, the cheerful distribution of light from above, and the exquisite manner in which stucco is designed, painted, and finished, exceed all my powers of description'.³⁸ He also declared,

I shall finish this description of the Alhambra, by observing how admirably every thing was planned and calculated for rendering this palace this most voluptuous of all retirements; what plentiful supplies of water were brought to refresh it in the hot months of summer, what a free circulation of air was contrived, by the judicious disposition of doors and windows; what shady gardens of aromatic trees; what noble views over the beautiful hills and fertile plains!³⁹

His delight with the Alhambra was palpable; as he confessed, it 'afforded me the most agreeable sensations, which I assure you, redoubled every step I took in this magic ground'.⁴⁰

This admirable work of the ancient Moors was often seen in contrast to that of contemporary Spaniards. For example, he complained of modern (that is, Baroque) Spanish architecture: 'No mad architect ever dreamed of a distortion of members so capricious, of a twist of pillars, cornices, or pediments, so wild and fantastic, but what a real sample of it may be produced in some or other of the churches of Madrid'.⁴¹ Fortunately, such sharp critical judgement did not stop him from acknowledging the refined Spanish taste displayed in the superb Royal collection of paintings contained in the King's palace outside Madrid.⁴² However, the moral character of contemporary Spaniards often suffered his disapproval; he criticised the 'indolence and inferiority of

the present proprietors; whose little skill they still shew in agriculture is nothing but the traditional remains of the instruction left by their masters in husbandry, the Arabians'.⁴³ Or again, 'listless indolence [...] is no where more indulged than Spain'.⁴⁴ He was also appalled at the wretched conditions of Spanish prisoners and slaves, whose treatment 'was not so easily reconciled to the principles of humanity, and the meek doctrine of Christianity'.⁴⁵ Even their virtuous 'charity, however laudable as to the intention, is certainly most prejudicial to the public welfare, as it encourages beggary and idleness; for who will work in a country where he is sure of a good dinner every day at the gates of a monastery or palace'.⁴⁶ His fellow Englishmen, on the other hand, were viewed in an entirely different and positive light when he visited the British garrison at Gibraltar. Now a British crown colony, it was seized from the Spanish and occupied by the British beginning in 1704.⁴⁷ He expressed 'the honest pride of Englishmen, in admiring the tall, handsome figures, and spirited, martial presence of the soldiers, and in drawing very comfortable parallels between them and the dirty melancholy dwarfs we had seen mounting guard in the Spanish garrisons'.⁴⁸ Ironically, Henry himself was of small stature. (As Hannah More observed upon his return to England, 'one is always surprised to find the author of two or three great big burly quartos a *little* genteel young man'.⁴⁹) Of course, such perceived English superiority could justify the 'comfortable' British colonisation of Gibraltar.

In addition to his enthusiastic assessment of Moorish architecture and his description of the Spanish land, its history and inhabitants, Swinburne offered pithy estimations of local inns (summarily rated from excellent, tolerable, bad to wretched)⁵⁰ and earthy descriptions of the culture, demonstrated by his analysis of the traditional Fandango dance, which 'exceeds in wantonness all the dances I ever beheld [...] A good Fandango lady will stand five minutes in one spot wriggling like a worm that has just been cut in two'.⁵¹ Even such lowly activity as public defecation did not escape his observation: 'To the lanes and alleys the common people retire to perform the most filthy of nature's functions; but they do it with much decency, having by long practice acquired great expertness in casting their cloak like a net, so as to fall exactly round at a proper distance from the body'.⁵² Such vivid commentary assured his travel book a wide and appreciative audience for decades to come and made his reputation. His *Travels through Spain* even proved useful to British military officers who sought information concerning Spanish customs and countryside in an effort to overcome Napoleon's troops during the Peninsular War (1808-1814).⁵³

Henry's view of Spanish Moorish monuments remained the principal record of these buildings as far as the British public was concerned until the early nineteenth century. James Cavanah Murphy's more extensive studies of Moorish architecture, the product of his visit to Spain from 1802 to 1809, were published posthumously in 1813 in *The Arabian Antiquities of Spain*. Reflecting a contemporary theory that Gothic architecture developed from Moorish origins, Murphy's illustrations distorted the Moorish buildings toward

a gothic norm.⁵⁴ Later in the 1830s one finds a tremendous burgeoning of interest in exotic Moorish Spain on the part of British artists. John F. Lewis and David Roberts both published views of these monuments following trips to Spain in the early 1830s,⁵⁵ after having been stimulated by David Wilkie's enthusiasm for Spanish pictorial subjects in the late 1820s. The allure of Moorish monuments for this generation of Romantic artists is also embodied in the publication *The Alhambra* (London 1832), dedicated to David Wilkie, and written by the American writer Washington Irving, the mutual friend of Lewis, Roberts, and Wilkie. As Irving explained:

It is impossible to contemplate this once favourite abode of Oriental manners, without feeling the early associations of Arabian romance, and almost expecting to see the white arm of some mysterious princess beckoning from the balcony or some dark eye sparkling through the lattice [...] [of this] Moslem pile, in the midst of a Christian land; an Oriental palace amidst the Gothic edifices of the West an elegant memento of a brave, intelligent, and graceful people, who conquered, ruled, and passed away.⁵⁶

The architect and ornamental designer Owen Jones also visited Spain in 1834 and 1837 to draw the Alhambra, after having studied Arabic ornament in Egypt; his magisterial publication, *Plans, Elevations, Sections and Details of the Alhambra*, appeared in 1842 and 1845, and served as the highpoint of this interest in Moorish design; he later went on to design the Alhambra Court for the Crystal Palace when it moved to Sydenham in 1854.⁵⁷ It was only in 1845 that a popular guidebook appeared to replace Swinburne's *Travels through Spain*, when Richard Ford published his two-volume *Handbook for Travellers in Spain, and Readers at Home* (London 1845). It included a lengthy discussion of the Moorish monuments, taking into consideration the contemporary fascination with the subject.⁵⁸ In retrospect, Henry Swinburne's keen interest in the 1770s seems especially precocious.

NOTES

1. Henry Swinburne to his brother Sir Edward Swinburne, 14 January 1776, in *The Courts of Europe at the Close of the Last Century*, ed. Charles White, 2 vols (London 1841), i.68.

2. John Sweetman, *The Oriental Obsession, Islamic Inspiration in British and American Art 1500-1920* (Cambridge 1988), see p.4: 'Spain, [was] virtually rediscovered by the post-Waterloo generation', and ch.4: 'After 1820: The Painter's Vision.' Sweetman briefly cites without discussion Henry Swinburne's eighteenth-century travel book in a footnote (p.281, n.17). The term 'Moors' is an imprecise but commonly used term to refer to the Islamic settlers in medieval Spain who arrived from North Africa in the early eighth century and were formally expelled in 1492. According to Michael Jacobs (*Alhambra*, New York 2000, p.12), the Moors 'formed a very mixed and divided group made up of an elite Arab minority, a Berber majority and numerous Syrians, Egyptians and Yemenis'.

3. Swinburne himself, when an unmarried young man, made 'what was called "the grand tour," and proceeded to visit Turin, Genoa, Florence, and other parts of Italy. After improving his classical knowledge and taste for antiquities by a careful examination of the pictures, statues, and splendid relics of architecture which he encountered during his travels, and having perfected himself in drawing, and in the language of the divine Alleghieri, he bid a temporary adieu to Italy, and retraced his steps by way of Paris, towards his native land.' See Swinburne, *The Courts*

of Europe, i.v. An extensive literature developed giving guidance to travellers embarking on the Grand Tour, including Swinburne's own publication, *Travel in the Two Sicilies...* (London 1783-1785), published after his groundbreaking *Travels through Spain*. For a broader discussion of the Grand Tour, see Jeremy Black, *The British and the Grand Tour* (Beckenham, Kent 1985). Black (p.5) defined the Grand Tour as 'essentially a trip to Paris and a tour of the principal Italian cities: Rome, Venice, Florence and Naples, in order of importance'. See also Jeremy Black, *Italy and the Grand Tour* (New Haven and London 2003). For a very informative review of the recent, burgeoning literature addressing the subject of the Grand Tour, see John Wilton-Ely, "'Classic Ground': Britain, Italy, and the Grand Tour', *Eighteenth-Century Life* 28, no.1 (Winter 2004), p.136-65.

4. Henry Swinburne's *Travels through Spain* is the subject of a chapter in Ian Robertson's *Los curiosos impertinentes: viajeros ingleses por Espana desde la accesion de Carlos III hasta 1855*, 2nd edn (Madrid 1988), p.96-117, although Swinburne's appreciation of Moorish architecture is not the focus of the chapter.

5. J. O. Fuller, *Swinburne: A Critical Biography* (London 1968); R. Rooksby, *A. C. Swinburne: A Poet's Life* (Aldershot 1997). Other members of the Swinburne family also made a mark in the time between Henry and Algernon. Henry's nephew, Sir John Edward Swinburne (1762-1860), was an important patron of British art in the early nineteenth century (see 'The gallery of Sir John Swinburne, Bart., in Grosvenor Place', *Art Union* 1, 15 May 1839, p.58-59); the patronage of Sir John Edward Swinburne is also discussed in Kathryn Moore Heleniak, *William Mulready* (New Haven and London 1980), p.161-64, and in Marcia Pointon, 'The Benefits of Patronage: A Study of the Relationship between William Mulready, R.A. and Two of his Patrons', *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 96 (September 1980), p.75-84. For the patronage and artistic production of Sir John's wife and daughters, see Kathryn Moore Heleniak, 'The "Swinburne Ladies" and the Arts', *Journal of the History of Collections* 16, no.2 (2004), p.267-84.

6. John Nichols, *Literary Anecdotes of the Eighteenth Century...*, 9 vols (London 1812-1816), ix.157.

7. Leigh, Sotheby, & Son, London, 10 January 1803: 'A Catalogue of the extensive and very valuable library, elegant persian manuscripts, pictures, prints, coins, cabinets, and other curiosities of Henry Swinburne, Esq., author of the *Travels into Spain*, etc.' Henry's favourite contemporary artist was evidently Benjamin West; fifteen prints after his paintings appeared in this sale. I would like to express my appreciation to the Grolier Club (New York City) for allowing me to consult this catalogue in their library.

8. For his biographical details, see the *Dictionary of National Biography*, vol.55 (1898), ed. Sidney Lee, p.229-31 (which was dependent upon Nichols, *Literary Anecdotes of the Eighteenth Century*), and the introduction to Swinburne, *The Courts of Europe*. The Swinburnes were welcomed in the courts of the Two Sicilies, Vienna and Paris. They were special favourites of Queen Marie-Antoinette. The Swinburne's property in the Caribbean was eventually lost and as a result their wealth was considerably diminished by the late 1780s; Henry was appointed vendue-master for Trinidad in 1801, a lucrative post; he died there from sunstroke in 1803.

9. Philip Thicknesse, *A Year's Journey through France and Part of Spain*, 2 vols (Bath 1777), i.150. Thicknesse met Sir Thomas and Henry Swinburne while they were all in Barcelona. Thicknesse's focus in this text was primarily on France with a short jaunt into the northeastern region of Spain. A copy of Thicknesse's *Memoir and Anecdotes*, 2 vols (London 1788), appeared in the sale of Swinburne's library in 1803 (see above, note 7, no.1230). Thicknesse is best known for writing the first biography of his friend Thomas Gainsborough, *A Sketch of the Life and Paintings of Thomas Gainsborough, Esq.* (London 1788). There was an explosion of travel literature in the eighteenth century to which Swinburne and Thicknesse contributed. There are famous examples by Henry Fielding (*Journal of a Voyage to Lisbon*, 1754; in the sale of Swinburne's library in 1803, see above, note 7, no.467), Tobias Smollett (*Travels in France and Italy*, 1765), Laurence Sterne (*A Sentimental Journey through France and Italy*, 1768), and Samuel Johnson (*A Journey to the Western Islands*, 1775), not to mention the publications focused upon serious examinations of Greek and Roman architecture (that is, James Stuart and Nicholas Revett, *Antiquities of Athens*, 1762, Robert Adam, *Ruins of the Palace of the Emperor Diocletian*, 1764).

10. Terry F. Friedman, 'Sir Thomas Gascoigne and his Friends in Italy', *Leeds Art Calendar* 78 (1976), p.16-23, and see below, note 12.

11. London, Kenwood House, *Pompeo Batoni and his British Patrons* (1982), no.35. Swinburne's portrait is now in the Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle upon Tyne. It is also discussed in Anthony M. Clark, *Pompeo Batoni* (New York 1985), no.414. Batoni's portrait of Sir Thomas Gascoigne (Lotherton Hall, Leeds) also features sculpted busts of Henry and Martha Swinburne in the

background, discussed in Friedman, 'Sir Thomas Gascoigne and his Friends'. In 1786 Richard Cosway provided a frontispiece portrait of Henry Swinburne (engraved by Mariano Bovi) for the 1787 edition of *Travels through Spain* to which was added *A Journey from Bayonne to Marseilles*.

12. Swinburne, *Courts of Europe*, i.60. Henry's letter to his brother, Sir Edward Swinburne, 27 July 1775: 'As Sir Thomas [Gascoigne] carries me, and it is an opportunity I never can expect again, I believe I shall be tempted to go.' Henry's wife and children remained in France while he was in Spain; see letter to his brother, 20 August 1775 in Swinburne, *Courts of Europe*, i.63: 'Mrs. S proposes passing the winter at a house in the plain near Tarbes [...] For my part, I shall go to Spain next month with my Pylades [Sir Thomas Gascoigne].'

13. Thicknesse, *A Year's Journey through France and Part of Spain*, i.158.

14. *Travels through Spain* was reissued in two octavo volumes in 1787 (versus the original 1779 single quarto volume), and in later editions of 1806 and 1810 with a slightly abridged text and a new title, *Picturesque Tour through Spain* in a larger folio format and with more engraved illustrations, all based upon drawings by Swinburne. It was translated into French in 1787 (Paris) by J. Benjamin de Laborde who wrote his own travels books on Switzerland and France in the 1770s and 1780s (see Mathieu Couty, *Jean-Benjamin de Laborde, ou le bonheur d'être fermier-général*, Paris 2001) and into German in 1787. The French and German editions appeared in the sale of Henry Swinburne's property in 1803 (see above, note 7, no. 1139).

15. Swinburne, *Travels through Spain*, p.63f.

16. Swinburne, *Travels through Spain*, p.80, 309. He also made reference (p.6) to Voltaire's *Candide* ('Everything, as Pangloss says, is for the best').

17. Swinburne, *Travels through Spain*, p.96-97.

18. Swinburne, *Travels through Spain*, preface, p.vi.

19. See Sir William Chambers, *Plans, Elevations, Sections and Perspective Views of the Gardens and Buildings at Kew in Surry* [sic], 1763; both buildings are illustrated in Sweetman, *Oriental Obsession*, fig.34-35. Sweetman (p.71) describes Chambers' Alhambra as 'the imaginary version of Islamic architecture accepted by the fashionable rococo gothic taste – an elevation of a fundamentally classical horizontality is given a top dressing of stars, palmettes and Gothic crockets'. Chambers seems to have looked at a preparatory drawing for the Alhambra, Kew Gardens, 1750 (British Architectural Library, London) by the Swiss artist, Johann Heinrich Muntz (1727-1798), a design (never built) that contains some genuine Moorish features – which Chambers nevertheless ignored. Muntz's design reflects his visit to Spain in 1748 where he saw Moorish buildings. For Muntz's drawing, see Sweetman, *Oriental Obsession*, p.72, fig.36. See also William Wrigte, *Grotesque Architecture or Rural Amusement* (London 1767).

20. Letter to Sir Edward Swinburne, 14 January 1776, in Swinburne, *Courts of Europe*, i.68.

21. ix.157.

22. Twiss's book has an interesting bibliography of earlier books on Spain, almost none in English.

23. Swinburne, *Courts of Europe*, i.68, letter to his brother, Sir Edward Swinburne, 14 January 1776.

24. This was eventually published in two volumes under the title *Las antigüedades arabes de Espana* (1780, 1804).

25. Richard Twiss, *Travels through Portugal and Spain in 1772 and 1773* (London 1775), i.245.

26. Swinburne, *Courts of Europe*, i.64, discussed in a letter to his wife, 6 January 1776.

27. Swinburne, *Courts of Europe*, i.115, letter to his brother, Sir Edward Swinburne, 3 September 1776. Swinburne explained that he 'shut myself up for four days at Madrid to copy out what I thought useful for my project'.

28. Swinburne, *Courts of Europe*, i.71, letter to his brother, Sir Edward Swinburne, 14 January 1776.

29. Swinburne, *Courts of Europe*, i.66, letter to his wife, 6 January 1776.

30. Twiss, *Travels through Portugal and Spain*, i.243.

31. Swinburne, *Courts of Europe*, i.94, letter to his brother, Sir Edward Swinburne, 29 April 1776.

32. Swinburne, *Travels through Spain*, p.vi.

33. The Yale Center for British Art, New Haven, Ct, has 186 drawings by Henry Swinburne from his extensive international travels, only a few of which relate to Spain and his study of Moorish monuments. Perhaps they derive in part from the collection described by Charles White, editor of Swinburne's *The Courts of Europe* (I, preface, p.iv), who reported that 'an extensive series of drawings' was then (1841) 'in the possession of Mrs. R. Walker, late of Mitchel Grove, Sussex', one of Henry's daughters, who also provided the material for this posthumous publication and

encouraged White to edit it. A watercolour entitled 'A View of Granada', signed and dated 1775, also appeared at Christie's London, 4/9/91, no.19 (reproduced p.20).

34. The engraver, F. Giomignani, was known for his engravings of the antiquities uncovered in Pompeii and Herculaneum. Swinburne engaged him while he was travelling in Sicily, preparing his next publication, *Travels in the Two Sicilies in the Years 1777, 1778, 1779 and 1780* (London 1783-1785). For recent extensive photographs of the Alhambra, see Robert Irwin, *The Alhambra* (Cambridge, MA 2004).

35. When Swinburne occasionally included translations of Arabic script in his text, they were also evidently incorrect. A nineteenth-century Professor of Oriental Languages, John Shakespear (*The History of the Mahometan Empire in Spain: Containing a General History of the Arabs, their Institutions, Conquests, Literature, Arts, Science, and Manners to the Expulsion of the Moors, Designed as an Introduction to James Cavanagh Murphy's The Arabian Antiquities of Spain*, London 1816, p.iv), notes, 'the generally accurate writer Swinburne, the fidelity of whose description of Arabian antiquities of Spain has been in most respects confirmed by subsequent travellers [...] was either misled by others, or attempted what he was himself wholly unqualified to perform' when he offered translations of Arabic texts. In particular, Shakespear was referring to Swinburne's inaccurate translation of the arabic verse around the rim of the fountain basin in the Court of the Lions (*Travels through Spain*, p.180-81). This observation is confirmed by the recent translations of the same verse in the official guide to the Alhambra by Pedro Galera Andreu and Jesus Bermudez Lopez, *The Alhambra and Generalife* (Spain 1999), p.117, and also by Richard Yeomans, *The Story of Islamic Architecture* (New York 1999), p.102. However, it is important to note that there were several Arabic texts in the sale of Swinburne's property (see above, note 7) following his death in 1803, including no.1503, 'The Alcoran, in Arabic'.

36. Swinburne, *Travels through Spain*, p.177.

37. Swinburne, *Travels through Spain*, p.179.

38. Swinburne, *Travels through Spain*, p.181.

39. Swinburne, *Travels through Spain*, p.187-88.

40. Swinburne, *Travels through Spain*, p.178.

41. Swinburne, *Travels through Spain*, p.351.

42. Swinburne, *Travels through Spain*, p.357.

43. Swinburne, *Travels through Spain*, p.93.

44. Swinburne, *Travels through Spain*, p.369.

45. Swinburne, *Travels through Spain*, p.125.

46. Swinburne, *Travels through Spain*, p.82.

47. Maurice Harvey, *Gibraltar* (Staplehurst, Kent 1996) for a history of the British crown colony of Gibraltar.

48. Swinburne, *Travels through Spain*, p.238.

49. William Roberts, *Memoirs of the Life and Correspondence of Mrs. Hannah More*, 2 vols (New York 1834), i.163.

50. Swinburne, *Travels through Spain*, preface, p.xii-xv.

51. Swinburne, *Travels through Spain*, p.46.

52. Swinburne, *Travels through Spain*, p.190.

53. Antony Brett-James, *Life in Wellington's Army* (London 1972), p.152.

54. Discussed in Tonia Raquejo, 'The "Arab cathedrals": Moorish Architecture as Seen by British travellers', *Burlington Magazine* 128 (August 1986), p.555-63. Murphy's book has a large format (26 in x 20 in) and is lavishly illustrated with 97 plates for Granada and 10 for Cordova. Murphy respectfully cites Henry Swinburne's judgements (p.4, 12, 15). Raquejo's article discusses the theory going back to Sir Christopher Wren that the Gothic style was created by the Arabs, an idea that gathers adherents in the Romantic era. Henry Swinburne is mentioned only briefly in this article, noting his observation that though the ornamental parts of Seville Cathedral were 'commonly said to be after the Gothic manner, [they] seem rather to be clumsy imitations of the models left by the the Moors'. (See Swinburne, *Travels through Spain*, p.265.) In fact, Swinburne expressed doubt about the connection of Gothic architecture to Moorish design, p.416-17: 'I have never been able to discover anything like an original design, from which the Gothic ornaments might be supposed to be copied...' As one of Swinburne's readers rightly observed, 'Swinburne thinks our Goths borrowed nothing from them' (see Nichols, *Literary Anecdotes of the Eighteenth Century*, viii.640, letter from M. Tyson to Richard Gough, 29 March 1779). Later nineteenth-century travellers are the principal subject of Raquejo's article.

55. John F. Lewis, *Sketches and Drawings of the Alhambra, Made during a Residence in Granada in the Years 1833-34* (London 1835); David Roberts, *Picturesque Sketches in Spain: Taken during the*

Years 1832 and 1833 (London 1837); Roberts also illustrated Thomas Roscoe's, 'The Tourist in Spain and Morocco', in *Jenning's Landscape Annual* (London 1838). Ignoring Henry Swinburne's earlier work, David Roberts wrote to a friend on 28 June 1832, 'I think on altering my route from Italy to Spain, as nothing has been done which gives any idea of the magnificent remains of Moorish architecture which are there'. Quoted in James Ballantine, *Life and Letters of David Roberts* (Edinburgh 1866), p.40. David Wilkie had described Spain as 'unexplored territory, the very Timbuctoo of art' when he was sketching there in the late 1820s (letter to Thomas Phillips, 14 February 1828, in Allan Cunningham, *The Life of Sir David Wilkie...*, 3 vols, London 1843, iii.503). Jacobs (*Alhambra*, p.160) points out that the artists and writers of the Romantic generation in their response to the Moorish culture of Spain could 'experience the thrills of the Orient without having to put up with the genuine dangers, difficulties and discomforts that they would have faced in the Orient itself'.

56. Washington Irving (under the pseudonym Geoffrey Crayon), *The Alhambra* (London 1832), 1.60, 80. Irving's emphasis upon a sensuous princess imagined within the walls of the Alhambra reminds one of 'the Western construction' of the Orient as discussed in Edward W. Said's seminal *Orientalism* (New York 1977). Robert Southey is often credited with being the first poet of the Romantic generation to introduce Spanish literature with Moorish references to English readers in the 1790s. See *Contributions of Robert Southey to the Morning Post*, ed. Kenneth Curry (Alabama c.1984), p.6.

57. See Jules Goury and Owen Jones, *Plans, Elevations, Sections and Details of the Alhambra, from Drawings Taken on the Spot in 1834 by J. Goury and in 1834 and 1837 by O. Jones, with a Complete Translation of the Arabic Inscriptions, and an Historical Notice of the Kings of Granada, from the Conquest of that City by the Arabs to the Expulsion of the Moors, by Pasqual de Gayangos*, 2 vols (London 1842-1845). Jules Goury, a French architect, had studied the Alhambra with Jones; he died of cholera in 1834. Jones began publication of his and Goury's Alhambra drawings in 1836 when the first plates issued to subscribers were among the earliest examples of British chromolithography; see Kathryn Ferry, 'Printing the Alhambra: Owen Jones and Chromolithography', *Architectural History* 46 (2003), p.175-88. Owen Jones' interest in Islamic architecture is discussed at length in Michael Darby, *The Islamic Perspective: An Aspect of British Architecture and Design in the 19th Century* (London 1983), catalogue for an exhibition at Leighton House Gallery, London.

58. Ian Robertson, Richard Ford, 1796-1858, *Hispanophile, Connoisseur and Critic* (Norwich 2004).